

# EPA grants let groups check cleanup efforts

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People living near five Superfund hazardous waste sites in Arkansas can obtain federal grants of up to \$50,000 to make sure cleanup efforts are satisfactory.

The Technical Assistance Grants are available to citizens' groups formed specifically to monitor Superfund sites. The money must be used to hire independent contractors to ensure hazardous wastes are adequately cleaned up.

Congress established the Superfund program in 1980 so the federal Environmental Protection Agency could deal with waste sites that endanger public health or the environment.

After a possible site is identified, the EPA ranks its hazardous potential. Among the factors evaluated are health risks, contamination of air or drinking water, and the potential danger of fire, explosion or direct contact with dangerous wastes.

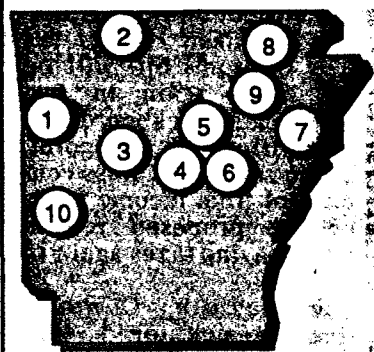
If a site's problems are serious enough, it will be listed on the National Priorities List, better known as the Superfund list.

Arkansas has 10 Superfund sites. There are 1,175 proposed and actual Superfund sites nationwide.

The granddaddy of the Arkansas Superfund sites, and the 17th worst in the nation, is the former Vertac Chemical Inc. plant at Jacksonville.

Cotton and roach poisons, the defoliant Agent Orange, and the pesticides 2,4,5-T, 2,4-D and silvex were once manufactured at the 90-acre site.

## Superfund sites



- 1 Industrial Waste Control-  
Sebastian County
- 2 Arkwood-  
Boone County
- 3 Midland Products-  
Yell County
- 4 Vertac Chemical Inc.-  
Pulaski County
- 5 Rogers Rd. Landfill-  
Pulaski County
- 6 Jacksonville City Dump-  
Lonoke County
- 7 Gurley Oil Pits-  
Crittenden County
- 8 Frit Industries-  
Lawrence County
- 9 Cecil Lindsey Dump-  
Jackson County
- 10 Mid South Wood Products-  
Polk County

Source: Environmental  
Protection Agency

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The abandoned plant contains about 30,000 drums of what the EPA classifies as "acutely hazardous wastes," the agency's most dangerous and most regulated category of waste.

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Vertac wastes contain high levels of 2,3,7,8-TCDD, the most toxic of dioxins. Soil in residential areas south of the plant has been contaminated.

Two other Superfund sites — the old Jacksonville city dump and the Rogers Road landfill — were linked to Vertac after former plant workers identified the landfills as sites the plant's wastes were dumped at.

The EPA also found pesticide wastes and dioxin in old drums sitting on top of the ground at the two landfills.

Two other Arkansas Superfund sites are old landfills where industrial wastes were dumped.

Sludge and liquid wastes from industry were dumped in the eight-acre Industrial Waste Control site near Fort Smith, and drums of industrial wastes were left at the four-acre Cecil Lindsey Dump in Newport (Jackson County).

Three other sites are old wood treatment plants: Arkwood, a 20-acre site near Omaha (Boone County); Mid-South Wood Products, a 57-

acre site near Mena (Polk County); and Old Midland Products, a 38-acre site near Ola (Yell County).

The last two Superfund sites are Frit Industries, an active 30-acre fertilizer plant in Walnut Ridge (Lawrence County) and the Gurley Oil Pits, a three-acre site near Edmondson (Crittenden County) that was used for sludge from the refining of waste oil in the 1970s.

Groups interested in obtaining a Technical Assistance Grant for the Arkwood, Gurley Oil Pits, Industrial Waste Control, Mid-South Wood Products or Midland Products sites should contact Ellen Greeney at the EPA's regional office in Dallas by calling (214)-655-6720.

The EPA may remove the Cecil Lindsey Dump from the Superfund list. The agency has removed chemical drums from the dump, which did not have a proper waste disposal permit.

The Cecil Lindsey Dump received industrial and municipal wastes from the mid-1960s to 1980. The agency is monitoring groundwater there. Officials say the EPA may remove the dump from the Superfund list because contaminant levels in the water have fallen.

The EPA is studying data from Frit Industries to determine if that site can be taken off the Superfund list. The site is being cleaned up by the owners under an EPA order to construct a treatment plant for surface water runoff, perform an environmental study of adjacent Coon Creek and monitor ground water.

Two groups submitted grant applications for \$150,000 in grants available for Vertac and the two Jacksonville area landfills.

The EPA hired an independent mediator to unite the two groups, but the effort failed.